

## Barcelona legal delegation visit hailed a success (26th October)

Some of the city's biggest law firms are beginning to benefit from an agreement between Leeds Legal and the Barcelona Bar Association made in 2010.

Representatives from firms Shulmans, Clarion, Lupton Fawcett, DWF, Virtuoso Legal, Cobbetts, The Needle Partnership, James Love Legal, Gordons, Pinsent Masons and HLW Keeble met a Spanish delegation of lawyers earlier this week in Leeds to discuss how best to share contracts and forge further links.

A delegation of 13 lawyers travelled to Leeds last week following the signing of a co-operation agreement between the two cities in 2010, as part of Leeds in Barcelona, a Marketing Leeds initiative which saw a 115 strong delegation from Leeds travel to Barcelona for a festival of commerce and culture.

Santiago Nadal, Principle of the Barcelona law firm SNAbogados, who led the Spanish delegation said:

"This is now our second visit to Leeds and we have been delighted by the links that have been forged. Both Leeds and Barcelona are recognised as major business hubs for their respective countries and the two cities are certainly learning from each other too. We are committed to building a long term relationship and building business links with significant legal professionals in Leeds."

During the visit to Leeds this week, a series of meetings and networking receptions took place beginning with a law fair style event, which provided an opportunity for representatives from both countries to introduce their firms. This was followed by seminars about the UK and Yorkshire business landscape, company issues and structures, employment and labour, trading terms and conditions and IP issues.

The delegation concluded the trip on Friday with a reception and dinner hosted at Northern Ballet, which boasts the largest dance studio in Europe.

The two-day visit was organised by Leeds Legal - an alliance of the city's law firms- with the ultimate aim of increasing cooperation and trade between the two cities. Leeds Legal has also travelled to Barcelona three times since 2009 to present seminars and give Leeds law firms the opportunity to meet organisations such as the Ilustre Col·legi D'Advocats De Barcelona (ICAB), its Spanish equivalent, British Chamber of Commerce in Spain and leading Catalonian law firms.

Earlier this year it was confirmed that major European Union funding had been won, to be invested in an exchange programme to allow lawyers from Barcelona, under the age of 35 to work in a firm in Leeds for a minimum of three months.

Alan M Baker, chairman of Leeds Legal, said: "This has been another highly successful visit between the two cities and one where we saw tremendous progress in terms of business relationships. This proactive programme of activity has already had a positive impact on legal sectors in both cities.

"It is now likely that the visit next year will focus on the creative and digital industries and will give specialist IP lawyers the chance to examine the differences and similarities between both countries. We very much look forward to this and the continued collaborative working of both legal communities."

Leeds is largest centre for legal, financial and professional services outside London.

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Tel 0113 245 4997

DX No 12079 Leeds